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Background Paper 11

**THE CAPACITY OF THE EDUCATION
SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO SKILL
DEVELOPMENT LEAVE**

David Stager

**Skill
Development
Leave Task
Force**

**Background
Paper**

Canada



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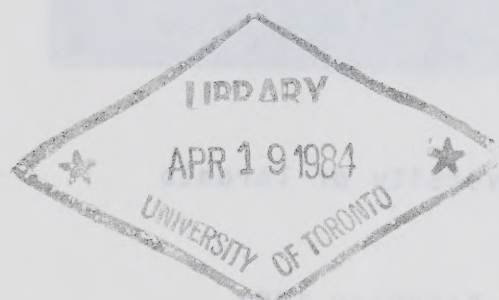
Background Paper 11
THE CAPACITY OF THE EDUCATION
SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO SKILL
DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

David Stager

University of Toronto

February 1983


This is one in a series of background papers prepared for the Task Force on Skill Development Leave. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Task Force or the Department of Employment and Immigration.



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I. SUMMARY

This report explores the capacity of the Canadian education system to respond to learning needs of adults, with specific reference to the potential implementation of skill development leave for all employees. Since the preparation of this report had to be accommodated within a short schedule, the emphasis is on the broad structure of the system and an outline of concerns that would require closer examination.

Recent proposals for employee leave for further education and training assume that the facilities and arrangements for such training will be available. While such a leave plan would incorporate many who now take training under other auspices, there would be some net increase in enrolments. The main feature in all variants of proposed leave plans is that leave could be taken during working hours, either by day or block release. European plans provide for about 5 to 15 days annually, with participation rates varying among countries, occupations, and age groups. It is estimated - and only as a guide to supply-side considerations - that roughly 200,000 persons might be involved at peak times over the next two decades, and that most of the training would be provided by educational institutions.

The education system is reviewed both in its narrow definition including schools, colleges, and universities, and in a broader definition which includes private vocational schools, cultural institutions, voluntary associations, trade unions, professional organizations, and training programs in government and private industry. Current data on much of the adult education that now occurs is not available because it either is not collected or is not published.

Part-time enrolments in degree programs are at about 250,000, with a further 100,000 in other non-degree credit programs at universities and about 150,000 at community colleges. There are also well over 500,000 enrolments in non-credit courses in postsecondary institutions. These institutions now number almost

200 community colleges and 65 universities although just less than half of the institutions in each category account for about 90 per cent of the total enrolment. School boards also offer academic courses, vocational training, and general interest courses for adults, with over 600,000 enrolled. The combined data for the formal education system show that these institutions can accommodate well over one million persons annually in part-time non-credit courses. This would indicate that the physical capacity is available to respond to substantial participation in a skill development program.

Other institutions and organizations that have traditionally offered training programs have involved large numbers of adults but available data can provide only a sketchy impression of the total activity. Private business and trades schools had a full-time enrolment of about 25,000 students a decade ago but there are no current data. Labour unions provide many of their members with training in union objectives and organization. Professional associations likely have 30,000 to 40,000 currently enrolled in continuing education programs. Training programs provided internally in government and private industry also involve a large number of employees but aggregate data are not available.

Certain qualitative features of the education system also need to be considered. Some basic questions concern the appropriate mix of vocational and general education in program designed for skill development, and how courses can be made short enough to fit the available leave while being complete enough to benefit the student. Instructors will need to adjust to a higher proportion of adults in day-time classes since adults have different learning requirements. The "open admission" policies for non-credit courses will require that students are well informed and counselled before beginning a course or program.

Credentials and accreditation have always posed problems for continuing education. Students want a certificate recognizing their achievements but there

will need to be a central agency for assuring the quality and transferability of these certificates. An information and counselling system must be an integral part of a leave plan, both to provide information on the availability of training and to counsel employees on appropriate training objectives.

Implementation of a skill development leave plan would require that this be integrated with the existing federal-provincial student assistance programs, perhaps augmented by an income contingent loan plan. It will also be necessary to clarify the status of new short courses offered specifically for skill development under the provincial schemes for institutional grants.

II. INTRODUCTION

Recent reports on labour market conditions in Canada have included proposals for some form of employee leave for further education and training. While such proposals show the need for skill development, they usually assume that the facilities and arrangements for this kind of training will be readily available. The purpose of this report is to focus on the capacity of the Canadian education system to respond to learning needs of adults, with specific reference to those needs arising from the potential implementation of skill development leave for all employees. Introduction of universal leave of this kind would likely generate a substantial net increase in demand for training. One of the basic questions raised by this prospect is how the supply side of the training market could respond, both in qualitative and in quantitative terms.

This introductory section of the report distinguishes among related concepts in adult education and training, then briefly reviews the proposals emerging from recent labour market reports and alternative meanings and mechanisms for training leave, and ends with very rough estimates of the potential demand for training. The next section includes a summary examination of existing institutions by level of education, programs, regions, etc. to show their capacity to meet further training demands. The final chapter reviews training programs with respect to admission criteria, content, and transferability.

Alternative Concepts and Terms

There are at least four terms that appear frequently in the literature on education and training and which need to be differentiated. These include adult education, continuing education, lifelong learning, and recurrent education. Educators involved in these activities have not agreed on universal definitions but there seems to be at least a general recognition of different objectives and groups represented by these different terms.

Adult education is

instruction designed to meet the unique needs of persons - beyond the age of compulsory school attendance - who have either completed or interrupted their formal education and whose primary occupation is other than full-time students.¹

Lifelong learning is

the process by which a person acquires knowledge and skills throughout his/her lifetime, in order to maintain or improve occupational, academic, or personal development.²

Recurrent education is

the distribution of education over a person's life span, which makes it possible to alternate between work, leisure, and education in a nonsequential manner.³

Continuing education generally is a term used in a less specific way, and may include each of the above situations, especially to emphasize that education may continue after termination of formal education. When continuing education is given a specific meaning, it frequently is in reference to the continuation of professional education through updating or refresher courses.

In the context of skill development leave, all of these concepts are appropriate but each refers to a specific component of the total program. Some persons would use their leave to improve basic language skills (adult education) while others would update their professional training (continuing education) and

1. Grover J. Andrews, p. 109.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

yet others would return to formal schooling for a year to acquire new vocational skills (recurrent education), but all would be involved in lifelong learning. This brief discussion is not meant to prescribe narrow usage of such terms but rather to emphasize that these different concepts and terms are not synonymous and must be used carefully in developing proposals and information on skill development leave.

Paid Educational Leave

Skill development leave has evolved from a similar but broader antecedent. Paid educational leave was defined by the International Labour Conference in its Convention 140, Article 1, to mean

leave granted to a worker for educational purposes for a specified period during working hours, with adequate financial entitlements.

The Convention defined "educational purposes" in Article 2 to include

- (a) training at any level;
- (b) general, social, civic education;
- (c) trade union education.

The matter of "adequate financial entitlements", the length of leave, and the mechanisms by which compensation would be provided, and the sources of financing were left to be determined "in accordance with national practice" in each country.

Paid education leave was further defined by the Department of Education and Science in the United Kingdom to mean

leave granted to an employee, over the age of 18 years, for educational purposes for a specified period during normal working hours without loss of earnings or other benefits; such leave being granted under statutory provisions, collective agreements or some other type of arrangement...⁴

This definition emphasizes three features:

- the employee maintains a right to return to his/her job;
- there is no cost to taking leave;
- leave can be taken during normal working hours.

4. A. Charnley, p. 19.

The length of leave will depend on the nature of the training required or desired, but will usually fall within one of three categories:

1. day release, whereby an employee can attend a one-or-two-day program, or can attend training sessions for a day per week or month over a longer period;
2. block release, whereby an employee can attend a training session lasting from several days to a few months; and
3. sabbatical leave, whereby an employee may be absent for one or two years for a major training or educational program.

Various methods and sources of financing for this leave have been proposed.

Some of the more common suggestions include:

Vouchers. Employers would bear the cost of the paid leave - as with a paid vacation - while the government would issue a voucher for a specified amount to purchase the required training.

Registered Educational Leave Plan. Employees would be permitted to contribute, for example, \$2,500 annually, to a tax-exempt registered educational savings plan, with the plan being used only for education or training. As with the voucher scheme, the employer could finance the period of leave, but the employee and government would share the cost of training.

Education Bank. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education recommended that

...all persons, after high school graduation, have two years of postsecondary education placed "in the bank" for them to be withdrawn at any time in their lives which best suits them.⁵

This arrangement could be covered by an educational leave plan, as well as a modified social security system, grants, and low-tuition colleges.

5. Carnegie Commission, Less Time, More Options, pp. 20-21.

Although the concept of paid educational leave was well known to labour market analysts and strategists through the 1970s, it became more widely known in Canada through the 1979 report of the (Adams) Commission on Educational Leave and Productivity. This Commission recommended that there be established a non-taxable Registered Educational Leave Plan by which employees could deposit \$2,500 annually into such a plan, and also that there be a vocational development fund for employees who did not have the registered educational plan.

This proposal was supported by the Task Force on Labour Market Development in the 1980s in its statement that "the Task Force regards this idea [Registered Educational Leave Plan] as one worthy of more detailed study to establish parameters and costs".

The Parliamentary (Allmand) Task Force on Employment Opportunities for the 1980s also proposed in their recommendation 88 that there be a Registered Education and Training Savings Plans, similar to Canada's registered retirement savings plans, whereby contributions to the plan would be tax-exempt and would be used "to pay for training or the expenses which accompany training".

The Economic Council of Canada in a recent report also recognized that the old cycle of schooling, training, and work is likely to be replaced by a sequence punctuated by frequent periods of retraining and re-education. In recognition of this, arrangements for lifelong skill development must be investigated carefully.⁶

This report also recommended

that Canada ratify the ILO convention on paid educational leave (number 140) and that the federal and provincial governments, along with industry and labour, consider the means for its implementation.⁷

6. Economic Council of Canada, In Short Supply: Jobs and Skills in the 1980s, p. 85.

7. Ibid., p. 101.

Finally, the Advisory Council of Employment and Immigration Canada recommended that

Employment and Immigration Canada should establish an educational leave plan which would give workers the opportunity to upgrade their skills so as to be prepared for the emerging new jobs.

This short review of paid educational leave, its alternative forms, and recent proposals, is included to provide some basis for estimating the potential demands to be placed on the education system. While this report is not intended to address the demand side at all, one cannot properly consider the supply response without posing the main features of the demand side.

Potential Demand for Skill Development Leave

Before assessing the capacity of the education system to respond to skill development leave (SDL) one must have an approximation of the quantity and composition of demand for these opportunities. This will, of course, depend on which of the alternative forms are chosen for SDL, but it should be possible to prepare estimates that are satisfactory at least for this examination of the supply side.

Reports of experience with paid educational leave in the European countries vary widely. Indeed, a survey of European experience states that

One of the most frustrating aspects of the demand for paid educational leave is the complete lack of reliable, up-to-date statistics.⁸

One apparently reliable source suggests that in France the average leave for participants is not more than 20 days per year, with at least 18 months required between leaves. This would reduce the average annual leave to about 13 or 14 days. The comparable figures for Germany are 10 days leave in a 24 month period, or 5 days annually. In either case, the total number of hours available - even if distributed in optimum, discrete units - significantly limits the kind of training that can be undertaken. For example, it would be possible to take

8. A. Charnley, p. 67.

intensive short-courses to acquire or update specific skills, but major occupational training for the skilled trades would have to be extended over several years unless longer periods of leave were taken at one time.

The French arrangements for paid educational leave set a maximum participation rate at any time at two per cent of the labour force. This rate is also commonly used in other reports on potential implementation of similar plans. It cannot be assumed however that the actual participation would always reach the two per cent level nor that the participation rate would be uniform for all groups. It is frequently observed, for example, that the demand for further education is determined primarily by one's level of educational attainment. In short, college graduates are much more likely to participate in further education than are persons who did not complete high school. Currently, about one-third of the Canadian labour force has some postsecondary education, with more than one million persons who have a university degree, slightly more with a postsecondary certificate or diploma, and another million who have had some postsecondary training but do not have a degree or diploma.⁹ It is expected that in less than two decades these groups will constitute about 45 per cent of the labour force and will number about 6.5 million persons. It is this component of the labour force that would be most likely to use skill development leave. If it reaches a participation rate of two per cent there would be about 100,000 persons involved by 1990 and about 130,000 by 2000. If the balance of the labour force were to participate at an average rate of one per cent there would be a further 80,000 involved. These figures suggest that at any given time there might be 175,000 to 225,000 persons participating in a broadly-defined skill development leave plan. This should be seen as a "peak

load" estimate for purposes of assessing the impact on the education system rather than as a basis for projecting annual costs. This latter calculation would of course require a much more detailed set of assumptions about the provisions for and participation in the plan.

There are two important differences between Canada and the European countries which would affect the scope and nature of demand. First, a large proportion of the labour force in Canada has neither English nor French as a mother tongue, and consequently may seek language training as part of skill development. Second, the European plans are for educational leave while the concept currently under examination in Canada is for skill development leave. The latter would deal exclusively with vocational training while the European plans include opportunities for more general education. Indeed, there would likely be pressure on a plan for skill development leave to adopt a very broad interpretation of vocational skills. One author in reviewing the European experience noted that

...in France, the vocational side of the recurrent education system within which paid educational leave arrangements are made was accepted as part of the price for general expansion of adult education.¹⁰

The same author went on to note that the Swedes and the French "seem to be jettisoning the distinction between 'liberal' and 'vocational' education ... to include a real choice of courses by the employee".¹¹

Although skill development leave would be available to the entire labour force, a number of constituent or target groups can be identified. These would have differentiated requirements for training and would therefore have special implications for the educational system. Such special groups would include the following:

10. A. Charnley, p. 66.

11. Ibid.

1. those who were unemployed or underemployed due to structural changes in the economy;
2. skilled workers who needed to maintain high skill levels related to technological change;
3. professionals needing to keep abreast of changes in their professional knowledge and practice;
4. young workers who terminated their formal education without sufficient skills to maintain employment;
5. women who entered or re-entered the labour force without sufficient skill to maintain employment.

A survey of the potential demand for adult learning opportunities in Ontario found that the preferred methods of learning were:¹²

1. attending regular classes or lectures (56%)
2. on-job-training (14%)
3. one-or-two-day seminars (7%)
4. all other forms (23%)

A major reason for the clear popularity of the classroom format was that almost two-thirds of the participants stated that it was important for them to receive official or formal recognition or credit for their achievements, and preferably in the form of a professional or vocational certificate.

12. I. Waniewicz.

III. SCOPE AND CAPACITY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

If a skill development leave plan were to be introduced in Canada in the near future, does the education system have enough physical and human resources to accommodate approximately 200,000 participants in the plan? This is the central question for this section.

In the European countries where paid educational leave has been in existence for several years, a survey of its impact found that

...it has been much easier to expand the educational system to accommodate education leave by use of available facilities. Only in France has it been necessary to develop additional instructional space and other facilities supported through ministry grants. In all other countries, existing public and private facilities have proved to be underutilized to a sufficient extent to make it possible to accommodate these extra students.¹³

While this answer is reassuring, it would seem prudent to consider separately the components of the education system to identify potential stress points. Moreover, this somewhat sanguine statement needs elaboration before it can be related to the Canadian context. The impact of paid educational leave on the existing educational institutions has been different in each country. In France, new private institutions were created to provide training services directly to private firms for their employees. In Germany, the programs were provided primarily by institutions that traditionally had provided adult education and were peripheral to the formal education system. In Sweden, since the participants are expected to conform to existing arrangements in the postsecondary system there has not been a major effect on the system.¹⁴

The education system will be reviewed here both in its narrow, formal definition and in a broader sense, particularly as it relates to adult learning opportunities. The former would include only schools, colleges, and universities,

13. K. Von Moltke and N. Schneevoigt, pp. 234-235.

14. Ibid., pp. 238-239.

but a wider definition would include the private vocational schools; cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, and libraries; voluntary associations, trade unions, professional organizations, and religious institutions; governments' training programs for employees and for the public; and private industry training programs.

As an example of the relative importance of these different institutions in adult learning, Table 1 shows that in recent years in the United States about one-fifth of the total participants are in the formal educational system. A comparable number are in programs provided by private industry and professional associations. It must be noted, however, that these are "head counts" and that there is substantial double-counting. If one could obtain comparable data for hours of instruction, the balance likely would swing strongly to the formal education system. Nonetheless, it is important to note the scope of the non-formal system, its potential for response to new learning needs, and the total number of persons involved.

The following review of each component in the education system emphasizes the number of persons who are already participating in further education on a part-time basis. A large fraction of these enrolments likely would undertake the same programs under the auspices of a skill development leave plan. One can therefore estimate at least implicitly what would be the net impact on the system. The more important change, however, likely would be a shift from evening to daytime attendance as employees gained the right to take training leave during regular employment hours.

Table 1

Sources of Adult Learning Opportunities, United States, 1978

<u>Education system</u>	<u>No. of persons</u> (millions)
College and university	
part-time credit	5.3
non-credit	3.3
graduate and professional	1.5
Elementary-secondary	
adult education	1.8
non-credit	<u>0.5</u>
Total	12.4 (21%)
 <u>Non-school sources</u>	
Agriculture extension	12.0
Community organizations	7.4
Private industry	5.8
Professional associations	5.5
City recreation	5.0
Churches and synagogues	3.3
Government services	3.0
Federal manpower programs	1.7
Military services	1.5
Trade unions	0.6
Free universities	<u>0.2</u>
Total	46.0 (79%)

Source: Richard Peterson, et al.

The Formal System

1. Universities

The term 'continuing education' is often used in Canadian universities to refer only to non-credit courses, namely those which are not included in degree or diploma programs. A broader definition would encompass students in part-time credit programs and those "mature" students who have returned to full-time study.

Students in part-time study for a university degree usually face the same requirements for admission, grading, and number of courses, that apply to full-time students. Arrangements for instruction of part-time students vary widely, however, from Atkinson College (York University) which is a separate college with its own faculty and buildings, offering courses only to part-time students, to universities where all part-time students attend the same classes with full-time students.

Mature Students

During the past two decades, Canadian universities have introduced a "mature student admission policy". This represents a major variation from the normal practice, whereby admission to any level of education was determined by performance at the immediately preceding level. If one left the schooling system one could re-enter only at the point of exit, regardless of what experience or skills had been acquired meanwhile. The "mature student" admissions clause, however, allows a mature student (as defined arbitrarily by each institution) to be admitted to the first year of an undergraduate program without reference to prior educational achievement. The student must complete that year satisfactorily to be accepted as a "normal" student.

Part-time Graduate Study

At universities where part-time graduate study is possible, students may work for a master's degree entirely on a part-time basis, but a doctorate program usually requires two years of full-time residence. Some universities, however, permit no part-time graduate study. Special part-time master's programs have been introduced, notably in education, business, and social work.

Table 2 shows part-time university enrolments in undergraduate and graduate degree programs for 1980-81, the most recent year for which data were readily available. The data include day, evening, and summer enrolments. These magnitudes indicate that the universities can and do accommodate large numbers of part-time students, and indeed have done so for a long time. There is little doubt that the universities could easily absorb the numbers of persons who would choose to enrol in a degree program, whether part-time or full-time, under the provisions of a SDL plan. Even if the normal leave consisted of up to 20 days leave annually - and the leave were taken as half-days - this would barely provide enough time for a full-credit university course. Only those who were able to arrange for longer leave would be involved in the degree programs. A much more important question concerns the capacity of universities to offer shorter courses that could be fitted into a shorter leave. This is considered next in conjunction with community colleges.

2. Community Colleges

The variety of institutions collectively termed "community colleges" has been a predominant factor in recent expansion of continuing education in Canada. Complete information on enrolments in these institutions has, however, been unavailable due to the diversity of programs and institutions. These include institutes of technology, colleges of applied arts and technology (in Ontario), colleges d'enseignement general et professionnel (CEGEP's in Quebec), community colleges, and other publicly-supported trade and vocational schools.

Table 2

Part-time University Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Enrolment,
by Province, 1980-81

<u>Province</u>	<u>Undergraduate</u>	<u>Graduate</u>	<u>Total</u>
Newfoundland	3,479	473	3,952
Prince Edward Island	705	18	723
Nova Scotia	5,279	1,065	6,344
New Brunswick	3,371	491	3,862
Quebec	83,636	11,915	95,551
Ontario	75,641	12,106	87,747
Manitoba	9,940	1,516	11,456
Saskatchewan	7,384	714	8,098
Alberta	10,902	1,804	12,706
British Columbia	12,675	1,946	14,621
Canada	213,012	32,048	245,060

Source: Statistics Canada, Education in Canada, 1981, 81-229, Tables 23 and 24.

Community colleges, in accordance with their intended objectives, have developed courses which are specialized in content, length, and format to meet local training needs, in addition to providing general education courses as an alternative to or preparation for university degree programs. Table 3 shows the importance of these specialized, shorter, non-credit courses. The data are for 1976-77 because these are the most recent available. (Financial constraints led Statistics Canada to cease publication of post-secondary non-credit data with that year.) Nonetheless, the data are informative on the scope of the non-credit enrolments at community colleges and universities. The non-credit enrolments at community colleges were more than double the number of credit enrolments, while at universities they were about two-thirds the size of the credit enrolments. More significantly, there were well over 500,000 enrolments in non-credit courses in these post-secondary institutions.

One would expect that much of the instruction offered through these non-credit courses would be incorporated in a SDL plan. Furthermore, the very large enrolments clearly demonstrate the capacity of these institutions to accommodate and to respond to requests for specialized instruction.

In Table 4, the geographic distribution of postsecondary institutions is shown by type and size of institution. Each province has at least a substantial basis from which instructional units could be developed to support a SDL program.

3. School Boards

One of the earliest organized forms of adult education in Canada was the evening course offered by local elementary and secondary schools for adults who wished to obtain school diplomas. Evening classes now offered by school boards include standard academic subjects, vocational training in business, commercial, trades and technical subjects, and general interest courses in arts and crafts, languages, and personal development and recreation. About one-half the enrolments have been in general interest courses, with the balance divided roughly equally between academic and vocational courses.

Table 3

Students Enrolled Part-time in Universities and Community Colleges,
by Type of Course, and by Province, 1976-77

<u>Province</u>	<u>Community Colleges</u>		<u>Universities</u>	
	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Non-Credit</u>	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Non-credit</u>
Newfoundland	2,405	6,836	5,377	3,595
Prince Edward Island	603	1,616	2,056	237
Nova Scotia	3,052	2,140	11,353	9,259
New Brunswick	2,007	264	8,212	3,995
Quebec	-	31,275	110,062	37,954
Ontario	76,356	91,697	137,289	66,421
Manitoba	2,853	5,760	19,997	9,035
Saskatchewan	7,174	58,320	12,958	13,032
Alberta	9,095	47,071	20,987	40,353
British Columbia	28,217	80,268	19,078	34,400
Yukon and N.W.T.	160	704	0	0
Canada	131,922	325,951	347,369	218,281

Source: Statistics Canada, Continuing Education, 81-253 (publication ceased 1977-78).

Table 4

Postsecondary Educational Institutions by Size,
Canada and Provinces, 1980-81

<u>Province</u>	<u>Community Colleges</u>			<u>Universities</u>		
	<u>Full-time Enrolment</u>			<u>Full-time Enrolment</u>		
	<u>Less than 1000</u>	<u>1000 and over</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Less than 5000</u>	<u>5000 and over</u>	<u>Total</u>
Newfoundland	5	1	6	0	1	1
Prince Edward Island	2	0	2	1	0	1
Nova Scotia	14	0	14	9	1	10
New Brunswick	8	1	9	3	1	4
Quebec	40	44	84	1	6	7
Ontario	7	23	30	10	11	21
Manitoba	7	1	8	6	1	7
Saskatchewan	2	1	3	2	1	3
Alberta	13	5	18	3	2	5
British Columbia	15	6	21	3	3	6
Canada	113	82	195	38	27	65

Sources: Statistics Canada, Education in Canada, 81-229, Table 16.

The data in Table 5 show the numbers enrolled for 1977-78, again because more recent data are not available due to discontinued publication of this series. With over 600,000 enrolled in non-credit courses, the schools more than equalled the quantitative significance of their postsecondary counterparts in providing short, specialized courses for local needs. In many localities and for many subjects, the content of non-credit courses at the schools, community colleges, and universities, is essentially the same. One of the reasons for this apparent duplication is that students usually prefer to take courses at the institutional level at which they ended their formal schooling. Students who left high school at grade 11, for example, are much more likely to enrol in evening courses at high school than at a community college because they feel more confident in a familiar learning environment.

In addition to the community colleges, there still exist some public trades schools and schools of nursing that have not been absorbed into the college system. They are much less significant in numbers, as the data in Table 6 will illustrate. Part-time enrolment data are not available, but the data for full-time enrolment indicate that these institutions are most prominent in Quebec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

The combined data for the formal education system show that these institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) can accommodate well over one million persons annually in part-time non-credit courses. Clearly the physical capacity is available to respond to substantial participation in a skill development leave plan. Whether the content, timing, administration, and location of the courses would be suitable are questions to be treated in a later section. One must next consider, however, the extended or informal education system represented by other institutions and organizations that have traditionally offered learning opportunities for adults.

Table 5

Students Enrolled Part-time in School Board Courses,
by Province, 1977-78

<u>Province</u>	<u>School boards</u>	
	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Non-credit</u>
Newfoundland	3,586	7,067
Prince Edward Island	0	0
Nova Scotia	1,442	22,245
New Brunswick	1,102	8,056
Quebec	56,306	161,463
Ontario	20,854	219,696
Manitoba	1,088	20,798
Saskatchewan	0	0
Alberta	12,644	69,464
British Columbia	6,682	91,403
Yukon and N.W.T.	164	950
Canada total	103,868	601,142

Source: Statistics, Canada, Continuing Education, 81-253 (publication ceased 1977-78).

Table 6

Full-time enrolment in Public Trades Schools and Nursing Schools
by Province, 1976-77

<u>Province</u>	<u>Public Trades Schools</u>			<u>Schools of Nursing</u>
	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>Pre-vocational</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Newfoundland	4,170	1,343	6,053	895
Prince Edward Island	893	0	893	192
Nova Scotia	8,700	3,688	12,388	773
New Brunswick	734	0	734	520
Quebec	22,217	16,693	38,910	0
Ontario	131	31	162	649
Manitoba	0	0	0	969
Saskatchewan	76	113	189	0
Alberta	4,885	4,852	9,737	1,223
British Columbia	15,787	620	16,407	881
Yukon and N.W.T.	819	801	1,620	0
Canada, total	58,952	28,141	87,093	6,102

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Vocational Education and Training, 81-209, (publication ceased 1976-77).

The Extended System

1. Private Vocational Schools

Private vocational schools have offered an extensive range of training programs for many years. There are two groups of such schools: business colleges which provide courses in typing, stenography, bookkeeping, and data processing; and private trades such as hairdressing, welding, and radio and television repair. Public control of the private vocational schools is limited to the requirement that they be registered with a provincial department, usually the Department of Labour or of Education, meet minimum standards for teacher qualifications and curriculum, and otherwise comply with legislation governing any commercial enterprise.

There are two general sets of circumstances within which these schools operate. First, in many cases where there are similar public institutions, there will also be one or two private schools offering parallel courses at greater cost, but with smaller classes and prospects of more personal instruction, and possibly shorter courses. Second, small private schools spring up in advance of the provision of public institutions; some survive but most disappear when public institutions are established. Although the private vocational schools sometimes are seen as being on the periphery of the education system, they have played a more substantial role in continuing education than is often realized. Data on these schools have not been published for several years but in the early 1970s there were in Canada about 60 business schools and 175 trades schools with a total full-time enrolment of approximately 25,000 students.

2. Labour Unions

Instructional courses provided by labour unions are concerned with improving a member's understanding of union principles, objectives, and organization. Such courses are more common in the locals of larger unions, and are primarily related to steward training, parliamentary procedure, and collective bargaining.

Higher levels in the union organizations also offer courses, from the local labour councils to the national and international unions. Of the latter, more than twenty have education departments providing weekend courses, residential schools, correspondence courses, and staff training programs.

The Labour College of Canada, established in 1963 in Montreal, provides an eight-week residential program consisting of courses in the social sciences and trade unionism, for an annual class of about 60 to 80 union members.

3. Professional Associations

Most associations related to specific white-collar occupations (accounting, law, engineering, medicine) have arranged educational programs for their members, but the courses vary widely in form, duration, and substances. In many cases the program is provided in cooperation with an educational institution. There is no single source for complete data on these programs, but it is generally known that the larger continuing education programs would include those for chartered and industrial accountants, bankers, insurance underwriters, assessors, and chartered secretaries. These and similar association programs would likely have 30,000 to 40,000 persons currently enrolled.

4. Voluntary organizations, Churches, and Synagogues

There are numerous organizations which serve the vocational, spiritual, and other personal interests of their members through a wide variety of courses. Some of these courses may be related directly to skill development - such as instructors courses offered by the Canadian Red Cross or family counselling offered by various religious and health organizations - but most of the courses are directed to personal rather than vocational development.

5. Governments' Internal Training

Governments are involved in the continuing education provided by each type of institution in the preceding sections through financial or regulatory control, but they are also responsible for direct provision of training. Governments do this in two ways: as an employer providing training for employees, and as a provider of courses for the general population.

The federal government provides much of its employee training through the Bureau of Staff Development and Training, a part of the Public Service Commission. These courses are concerned primarily with management, personnel relations, data processing, and languages. Military training is also a major federal responsibility but is not directly relevant for consideration of skill development leaves since non-military personnel likely would not be accepted for training under those auspices. Provincial governments also conduct employee training, through civil service commissions, in management and personnel skills.

Governments provide numerous courses for the general public, using governments' own staff and accommodation. These include items such as agricultural short courses, arts and crafts training, fire and safety instruction, and forest management.

6. Training in Industry

The term "training in industry" could be interpreted broadly to include informed learning on the job but it is intended here to include only a structured system of instruction. This would range from safety and orientation training, through training in specific skills, to sales and management courses. No comprehensive survey has been conducted for more than a decade to obtain data on the total number of firms, courses, employees, and hours involved in this form of training. Data are available for registered apprentices, participants in federal and provincial government training programs, but earlier surveys have indicated that these might represent no more than one-third of the total number involved.

Future Capacity of the Education System

The foregoing sections have reviewed the current use of the education system for part-time study but one should also question whether these institutions are now at full capacity, and what quantitative changes may occur in the future.

From a very general perspective it would appear that the system is not at full capacity. Part-time enrolment in most credit courses in universities and colleges could be increased because in many courses enrolment is limited only by classroom size. In the physical and life sciences, engineering, and business, however, institutions are operating at capacity because enrolments have shifted toward these fields in recent years. But it was seen earlier that the burden of demand for training for skill development would be on courses such as the short, non-credit courses (although there may be pressure to assign formal credit for completion of modular units of such courses). While enrolment in a particular course of this nature may be at its maximum (based on a fixed student: equipment ratio for example), it would be possible in most cases to repeat the same course at more frequent intervals through the year. Moreover, for a number of non-credit courses, instructors are obtained from practitioners

in the field instead of or to complement an institution's full-time staff. In such cases, the course can not only be offered more frequently, but more sections can be offered at the same time if there is little or no need for major equipment. Very few institutions have reached a point where classroom space is fully utilized but there are of course problems in matching room size and course enrolments. This can require rescheduling, splitting courses into sections, and renting adjacent accommodation.

In the future, the capacity of the education system to accommodate skill development leave can only be enhanced. The declining enrolments and school closings that have been common at the elementary-secondary level are forecast - albeit in more modest terms - for the postsecondary level. Although the forecasts vary with alternative assumptions, enrolment in Canada's elementary and secondary schools is forecast to decline by 100,000 to 200,000 over the next decade and to exceed current levels by the end of the century only if there is a substantial increase in fertility rates.¹⁵ Enrolments in postsecondary institutions are forecast to decline until the late 1990s, then increase slightly for a decade, and decline again - unless fertility rates increase significantly. Furthermore, the forecasts for university enrolments assume an increased participation rate for part-time students. The next two decades therefore present an opportunity to implement a skill development leave program that could readily be accommodated within the existing system, at least in aggregate terms.

15. David K. Foot. Canada's Population Outlook: Demographic Futures and Economic Challenges. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Economic Policy, 1982.

IV. PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATION

Certain qualitative features of the education system would be affected by and may need to be revised for optimum implementation of skill development leave. These can be categorized as follows:

1. content and structure of courses and programs
2. instruction and facilities
3. admission criteria and procedures
4. testing and certification
5. information and counselling
6. costs and financing

The major institutional barriers to adult participation in further education have been found in numerous surveys to include the difficulties with attending full-time and for long periods, scheduling conflicts with other obligations, lack of information about offerings or lack of offerings, administrative requirements, and lack of childcare and/or transportation.¹⁶ These and similar barriers are considered in the following sections.

Content and Structure of Courses and Programs

In the current literature on continuing education, particularly as it relates to vocational training, there is some disagreement on the form and content that will dominate in future courses and programs. One view is that courses will need to be short and specialized with specific vocational aims, in contrast to the liberal arts courses that tend to be longer, more general, non-vocational, and directed to "college-age" youth. An alternative view is that these latter courses will be the main component of any form of educational leave. It has been suggested, for example, that

16. K.P. Cross, The Missing Link, p. 99

"...the vocational side of the recurrent education system within which paid educational leave arrangements are made was accepted as part of the price, for general expansion of adult education".¹⁷

Yet a different view argues that the issue is not vocational versus general education, but how much general education is required for vocational education.¹⁸

With a program that emphasizes skill development, by contrast with the broader European concept of educational leave, it will be essential to make explicit the function of basic and general education as correlates of skill training. Those responsible for administering a skill development leave program, in governments, industry, and educational institutions, will need to evolve this understanding with each other and will undoubtedly act as umpires for those who are trying to push the program too far in either direction.

Regardless of the mix of vocational and general education that is evolved, the great majority of students will be looking for short courses. This will be true whether they are on day release or block release because the total number of hours of leave available annually is likely to be in the range of 50 to 150 hours. Since this time should provide for commuting, study, and library and/or laboratory work, courses which traditionally have required say 75 hours in classroom instruction may have to be broken into two or three units.

Instruction and Facilities

Adults learn differently and have different teaching requirements from those associated with younger students. Furthermore, younger groups are more homogeneous and can be treated similarly. Adults constitute quite heterogeneous groups, differing in age, occupations, marital and family status, and general experience. Their motivations and learning capacities therefore also differ widely.

17. A. Charnley, p. 66.

18. K. Von Moltke and N. Schneevoigt, p. 21.

Adult education has traditionally been provided in part-time, evening courses, and often by part-time instructors. These instructors generally face the same pressures encountered by their students - rushing from work to class, anxious to accomplish the task in minimum time, limited time available outside class, and so on. With a shift to educational leave and day-time courses, the adult students would encounter more full-time instructors who resemble their students less than do the part-time instructors, and who are more inclined to use the same teaching methods for adults that they have used for younger students.¹⁹

Even the physical conditions for learning may need to be different. Adults require, even more than do younger students, proper lighting in classrooms, comfortable seating, and lecturers who can speak audibly, clearly, and are willing to repeat important material. Problem sets and review exercises are also more important to test understanding and recall.

Admission

Admission to courses or programs for which formal academic credit is awarded traditionally has been based on the level of achievement in previous academic work. During the past fifteen years there has, however, been some modification of this tradition through the introduction of "mature student" clauses in admission requirements. These arrangements recognized that inadequate or incomplete secondary school performance years earlier may not now be a valid indicator of motivation and ability to undertake postsecondary courses. The "mature student" clauses typically permit a student who is 5 to 15 years beyond high school to enrol in one or two post-secondary courses, and if successful in these, to continue in the program.

19. Ibid., p. 222.

The non-credit courses usually have "open admission", with no specific requirement of previous academic attainment. Although this appears to make it much easier to introduce a vocational training program for a diverse section of the labour force, it in fact presents a major hazard. In order to be of maximum effectiveness, the content and presentation of courses need to be designed for a fairly homogeneous group of students. There would be a trade-off, therefore, between offering the course for a more diverse group of students and maximizing its effectiveness. In any case, there needs to be an adequate description of the content and level of the course to reduce the wastage of time and resources that would result if an employee embarked on an unsatisfactory program.

Student Evaluation and Credentials

A major problem encountered everywhere in the development of facilities for lifelong learning has been the matter of testing or evaluation of students and the recognition to be awarded when students complete a program or attain a certain standard of performance. Although the proliferation of degrees, diplomas, and certificates and the resulting "credentialism" (relying on these as indicators of a potential employee's ability) has been widely criticized, it is unlikely that such credentials can be de-emphasized under a skill development program. On the contrary, "many people derive a great and perfectly innocent satisfaction from receiving some tangible mark of their educational achievements...".²⁰ Furthermore, a form of certification is required to assist counsellors and advisors in directing students to appropriate courses and programs. For this purpose, certificates should not simply signify completion of a course but they should also "contain as detailed an educational profile as possible so that individuals are given credit not just for overall performance but for many aspects of their achievements".²¹

20. G. Williams, pp. 91-92.

21. Ibid., p. 92.

Under a paid leave system students are more likely to take short, interrupted units of training to suit their time and location. This will make it even more important than it is already that credit will have to be awarded for the smallest possible discrete units of training or skill attainment. Furthermore, these credits will need to be readily transferable across programs, institutions and regions. This concept is already under development elsewhere in the form of a Continuing Education Unit (CEU). This is a quantitative measure for participation in continuing education that has been developed by a task force of the National University Extension Association in 1968.

Although the "credentialing" function of universities was perfected over a long history in its examination system for degrees, the formal educational institutions may not be the most effective base for developing and administering universal credits. Instead, an independent agency may be required to serve this specific function. Such an agency would not only be responsible for uniform, transferable credentials, but would also be responsible for the accreditation of institutions and programs that would be necessary to achieve wide acceptability of the credentials.

The potential response from proprietary institutions should be explored carefully before a leave plan is formulated. It is possible that numerous, profit-oriented training firms would emerge in response to a universal training program that accorded considerable personal choice to the potential student. One author²² has noted that institutions providing facilities for continuing education in the past "were barn raisers, not claim jumpers", that is, they were part of an adult education movement that was characterized by cooperation rather than competition.

22. M.R. Stern, in H.A. Alford (ed.), p. 5.

The response of "educational jobbers" obviously will depend on the intent and regulations for the proposed plan. In France, there was no official approval required to operate as a training centre because the policy was to create a free market in education and training. Many types of institutions were created specifically in response to the 1971 law for paid educational leave, with the result that some institutions - termed "Marchands de Soupe" - abused this legislative freedom.²³ By contrast, paid educational leave in Sweden was imposed on an existing education system such that it would "merely introduce legislative coherence to a system which is already working efficiently in practice".²⁴

In order to prevent unsatisfactory institutions from emerging and to encourage existing institutions to respond with sufficient, flexible, and appropriate programs, there needs to be a central agency that is concerned with programs available under SDL, but is not responsible for the administration of the plan. This agency might be similar to the National Education and Training Agency proposed by the Adams Commission. Such an agency would have a special role in vetting the training proposals that are likely to be promoted by private entrepreneurs for enterprises planning to provide their own skill development leave plans. It would also be responsible for assuring that there were acceptable programs and practices. The latter have been specified as follows:

Standards of ethical practice in continuing education should be a part of the certification or accreditation process and should concern at least the following:

1. the professional responsibilities and integrity of the personnel, staff and faculty
2. integrity in admissions and recruitment, record keeping, student relations personnel relations, publications, financial matters, and organizational practices in general
3. fair practices in relations with other institutions, agencies, or organizations

23. A. Charnley, p. 46.

24. Ibid., p. 55.

4. acceptable practice in program development and implementation procedures, including completion requirements and outcome utilization
5. full disclosure of accurate and pertinent information concerning the policies and procedures of the institution, organization, or agency and concerning its status or recognition in the education community.²⁵

Information and Counselling

An important requirement for the successful integration of a skill development leave program into the existing education system is an information and counselling system that links the labour market and the education system. This requires a close association between those responsible for monitoring and assisting labour market adjustments and those responsible for educational planning and policies. An SDL information system would, for example, need to be an integral feature of the new Canadian Occupational Projections System, such that there could be a continuous, two-way flow of information.

An information and counselling system has two basic functions:

1. to provide information on the availability of courses and programs in terms of location, contents and financial arrangements; and
2. to match students and programs based on students' educational objectives, abilities, and means.

In the latter case, counsellors are required to help determine reasonable training objectives, and to assist in assessing the availability of time, funds and energy to undertake a given program. Counsellors can be seen as brokers linking students, programs, and sponsors. It will therefore be critical to the success of a skill development plan to define and enforce the responsibilities of these "brokers" since there is the potential hazard that they will serve mainly one of these three groups.

25. G.A. Andrews, p. 117.

The quantitative importance of this service is evident from the following assessment of the effectiveness of similar leave plans elsewhere:

...there seems to be an intermediate stage between the legislation granting paid educational leave and the growth of its effective demand by individual employees. This stage involves telling employees of their legal rights, informing them of the suitability of courses and persuading them to apply. A rudimentary counselling service is required and the evidence from France implies that, without this educational process about education, it will be difficult to attract an adequate total number of employees and the least educated, for whom paid educational leave is a particular opportunity, will be the most elusive. Thus, it appears that counselling, no matter how rudimentary, is an essential part of the apparatus of paid educational leave arrangements.²⁶

Even with an extensive information campaign, it is the most highly trained employees who are likely to be most aware of the program. A survey in France taken two years after the 1971 Law introducing paid educational leave found that 96 per cent of the executives, but only 67 per cent of manual workers, were aware of this law.²⁷

An information and counselling service is particularly important if a voucher system is used for SDL. Others have noted that the voucher proposals tend to place too much emphasis on the psychology of financial means and the flexibility in choice that is assumed to result. Inadequate attention is given to the ability of users to acquire and process information for appropriate decisions.

Costs and Financing

A cryptic, candid comment on the French arrangements would seem to summarize the potential circumstances in Canada as well:

If an individual knows the law well, and is reasonably adept at using it, he will usually find some section which will enable him substantially to cover his costs of paid educational leave.²⁸

26. A. Charnley, p. 74.

27. Ibid., p. 75.

28. Ibid., p. 104.

The juxtaposition of a skill development leave plan with existing financial provisions for postsecondary education raises a number of interesting questions. Two important financial assistance arrangements would need to be confirmed or modified under SDL. These are the combined federal and provincial loan-grant schemes which combine the Canada Student Loan Program with provincial loan and/or grant provisions; and the personal income tax regulation that allows students' tuition fees, accommodation, and travel to be deducted from taxable income.

Where employers' financial support for an extended leave period is inadequate for reasonable maintenance costs, students could be assisted with an income contingent loan plan to augment their expenses. Under this plan a student would pay a surtax of say .05 per cent of income for each \$1,000 borrowed, with any outstanding principal amount forgiven after 25 years. For example, a student who borrowed \$10,000 and had a taxable income after returning to full-time employment of \$30,000 would pay \$1,500 for seven years. (One could consider the implicit interest on this loan as being paid through the increased tax revenue generated by the skill development training. Indeed, the governments may reduce the required principal repayment in recognition of the tax-generating effect of the training.)

Provincial grants to institutions usually are not available or are discounted for non-credit courses at universities and colleges. Consequently, these courses could be provided only on a cost-recovery basis that would necessitate a proportionately higher tuition fee. Students would therefore need to be financially assisted in such a way that their decisions are not sensitive to fee differentials.

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